

In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for planning a business decision, the method comprising the steps of:

- obtaining requirement-indicating data of a first entity with respect to ~~the~~ a transactional subject;
- automatically transmitting the obtained requirement-indicating data from a first business entity to a second business entity over a communications network;
- automatically feeding the transmitted requirement-indicating data into an electronic processor for monitoring the transactional subject, the electronic processor being associated with an electronic processing system of the second business entity; and
- generating a business decision of the first business entity and the second business entity that is based on the requirement-indicating data and that is made solely by the electronic processing system without the need for manual data entry into or manual data extraction from the electronic processing system.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the obtaining step comprises obtaining demand-indicating data, the demand-indicating data including at least one of demand data and forecast data on the transactional subject.

3. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the obtaining step comprises obtaining inventory-tracking data, the inventory-tracking data including at least one of consumption data and inventory data.

4. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the generating step comprises generating an order as the business decision, the order being for the transactional subject based on the requirement-indicating data.

5. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the generating step comprises generating a shipping instruction as the business decision, the shipping instruction being for the transactional subject based on the requirement indicating data.

6. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the feeding step comprises feeding the transmitted requirement-indicating data into an enterprise resource planning system as the electronic processor.

7. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the obtaining step comprises ~~comprising~~ extracting a subset of the requirement-indicating data from a requirement-indicating database associated with an enterprise resource planning system.

8. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the transmitting step comprises transmitting superseding requirement-indicating data on an as-needed basis to replace prior requirement-indicating data at the second business entity.

9. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the transmitting step comprises transmitting differential data for expressing a change with respect to prior requirement indicating data at the second business entity.

10. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the generating step comprises generating the business decision on production of the transactional subject based on an exchange of the requirement-indicating data at a regular interval, the regular interval having a duration that depends upon a nature of the business of the first business entity and the second business entity.

11. (currently amended) A method for planning a business decision, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining demand-indicating data with respect to a transactional subject;

automatically transmitting the obtained demand-indicating data from a first business entity to a second business entity over a communications network;

automatically feeding the transmitted demand-indicating data into an electronic processor for tracking the demand-indicating data, the electronic processor being associated with an electronic processing system of the second business entity; and

generating a business decision of at least one of the first business entity and the second business entity that is based on the demand-indicating data and that is made

solely by the electronic processing system without the need for manual data entry into or manual data extraction from the electronic data processing system.

12. (original) The method according to claim 11 wherein the obtaining step comprises accessing the demand-indicating data in a database associated with an enterprise planning resource system.

13. (currently amended) The method according to claim 12 ~~11~~ wherein the obtaining step comprises updating demand-indicating data in the database on a daily basis after an end of a business day and prior to a beginning of a next successive business day.

14. (currently amended) The method according to claim 12 ~~11~~ further comprising the steps of
extracting a relevant portion of the demand-indicating data from the database; and
formatting the extracted relevant portion of the demand-indicating data into an extensible mark-up language document.

15. (original) The method according to claim 14 wherein the transmitting step comprises transmitting the extensible mark-up language document as the demand indicating data over the communications network.

16. (original) The method according to claim 15 further comprising the steps of receiving the transmitted extensible mark-up language document; and translating the extensible mark-up language document into a data format compatible with an enterprise planning resource system.

17. (currently amended) The method according to claim 12 ~~11~~ wherein the transmitting step transmits the demand-indicating data in the database on a daily basis after an end of a business day and prior to a beginning of a next successive business day.

18. (original) The method according to claim 11 further comprising the step of displaying the demand-indicating data for a user affiliated with one of the first business entity and the second business entity.

19. (original) The method according to claim 11 wherein the business decision comprises deciding to change the manufactured quantity of a material as the transactional subject.

20. (original) The method according to claim 11 wherein the business decision comprises deciding to change a supply of material to fulfill a firm demand derived from the demand-indicating data.

21. (original) The method according to claim 11 wherein the obtaining step includes obtaining one of demand data and forecast data with respect to the transactional subject.

22. (currently amended) The method according to claim 11 wherein the first business entity represents a customer of a ~~the~~ material as the transactional subject and wherein the second business entity represents a supplier of the material.

Claims 23-33 (canceled)

34. (new) The method according to claim 1 wherein the business decision comprises an order processing decision.

35. (new) The method according to claim 34 wherein the order processing decision comprises procuring a production material for either said first business entity or said second business entity.

36. (new) The method according to claim 1 wherein the business decision comprises engaging in a commercial transaction involving the transactional subject.

37. (new) The method according to claim 36 wherein the commercial transaction comprises purchase of the transactional subject.